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Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6168th meeting

Thursday, 23 July 2009, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Rugunda	(Uganda)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2009/344)

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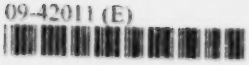

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2009/344)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Choi Young-Jin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Choi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/344, which contains the twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Choi Young-Jin, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Choi Young-Jin: The announcement of the new Ivorian presidential election date of 29 November 2009 is a very positive step towards the resolution of the Ivorian crisis. This progress was made possible by the determined efforts of the Ivorian protagonists and the timely intervention of the Facilitator.

Also, unmistakable worrying signs of probable delays in both the elections and the reunification process notwithstanding, solid and significant achievements have been made in the Ivorian electoral process. They include the mobile court operation and the identification and voter registration operation, which resulted in over 6.5 million people identified. All the major protagonists appear to have accepted the end of the voter registration operation on 30 June 2009, which is another positive step forward.

It should be highlighted that these historic and strategic achievements have been accomplished without a single major incident. The prevailing climate of peace and stability attests to the maturity of the political culture and the spirit of compromise and non-violence of the Ivorian people, as well as the critical contribution made by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and the impartial forces.

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire will leave no stone unturned in its provision of assistance and in its role of accompanying the process with a view to minimizing any further delay in the electoral and reunification processes.

However, given the ownership by the Ivorian protagonists of the Ivorian peace process, it is incumbent on them to deliver on their commitment to the 29 November presidential election as well as on the reunification-related provisions of the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (Ouaga IV), which increasingly appear to place conditions on the electoral process.

The second half of 2009 appears to be decisive for the Ivorian peace process. If things proceed as envisioned and planned by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement protagonists, both the electoral and the reunification processes should produce irreversible results by September. On the other hand, those processes may encounter profound difficulties in September if the complicated political-security-financial matrix facing the Ouagadougou Political Agreement process remains unresolved.

In terms of Ouaga IV, four critical reunification-related issues are to be accomplished at least two

months prior to the election, that is by September. They are, first, the transfer of authority from zone commanders to préfets; secondly, the centralization of the treasury; thirdly, the profiling of Forces nouvelles — the rebel elements — for integration into the army, police, gendarmerie and as ex-combatants; and fourthly, their reintegration as well as payment. Numerous efforts have been made to address those issues, but things are not moving as planned. Genuine progress has yet to materialize.

Yet, even before we worry about reunification issues of a political nature, the Ivorian elections management body appears to be struggling with the more chronic questions of managing and planning the electoral process. As it stands now, non-political challenges, such as the technical, managerial and planning aspects of the electoral process, are rapidly emerging as the major impediments to respecting the 29 November deadline. These non-political impediments are not to be underestimated. We have already seen that the identification process, originally planned to last six weeks, eventually lasted nine months and two weeks, from September 2008 to June 2009. A public electoral timeline with detailed stages will constitute one of the most important remedies to this chronic and pervasive problem.

Given this mixed picture of worrying signs amid solid progress, and given that the nature of these worrying signs will become more evident in September, we may have to develop options in the run-up to the next Security Council consultations on Côte d'Ivoire, due in October, with a view to finding a way to reconcile the contradictions currently facing the Ivorian electoral and reunification processes.

The President: I thank Mr. Choi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to make a modest contribution at this meeting of the Security Council on the twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2009/344). I wish first of all to express my Government's appreciation for the quality of the report, which describes progress made in the implementation of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire.

As the Secretary-General acknowledges in the report before the Council, significant progress was made during the past two years in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement and the supplementary agreements. Indeed, the political environment in Cote d'Ivoire continues to be peaceful due to gains made through implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister continue to carry out their activities in the peace process with a view to strengthening the social environment in the country. Among those activities are State visits by the President to various regions of the country previously occupied by the Forces nouvelles. During the most recent visit, the President travelled with the Prime Minister and several other members of the Government to the Montagnes, Bafing and Denguelé regions from 7 to 21 June 2009, to bring peace to the people and reunify the country.

Owing to this overall peaceful climate, all the Ivorian political parties have been calmly carrying out their activities throughout the country. As of 30 June 2009, overall statistics concerning registration for the new identity cards show that about 6.5 million people, or about 75 per cent of the intended target population, have been registered.

Regarding security, the overall situation remained stable during the reporting period, especially with the redeployment of the 8,000 personnel of the Integrated Command Centre throughout the country. A workshop was held in Abidjan on 8 and 9 June to assess the implementation of the fourth supplementary agreement, during which priority activities were identified for the next five months and a timetable was set. The first meeting of entities in charge of following up the implementation of the military aspects of the fourth supplementary agreement was held on Thursday, 25 June. The report of the workshop was endorsed and a programme of work adopted. A meeting will be held every 15 days.

The next meeting of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement will be held on 9 August in Burkina Faso. The meeting will be an opportunity to review the remaining stages of the peace process.

In the coming months, priority will be given to consolidating the reunification of the country, continuing the regroupement, disarmament and

reintegration of ex-combatants, strengthening social cohesion, and preparing and holding credible elections on 29 November.

Following the assignment and ongoing deployment of 8,000 members of mixed units of police and gendarmerie elements, efforts will continue to be made to consolidate the deployment of the mixed forces and to give the Integrated Command Centre the intervention logistics necessary to secure the electoral process. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process already under way should be strengthened through efforts to mobilize and provide in a timely fashion the necessary resources in the framework of the DDR process as soon as possible and in accordance with the recommendations of the fourth supplementary agreement.

With regard to the civil service, we will do our utmost to ensure that the sites in Sangouine, M'Bahiakro and Guingreni open in the coming months so that 700 young people trained in the use of firearms can be hosted with full room and board. The proposed financing from the European Union, totalling $7 million, should help to start the training of 4,000 people in six new vocational training centres rehabilitated by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation.

Together with financing from the World Bank amounting to $17 million, which was concluded on 11 February, it will be possible to train in two years up to 12,000 ex-combatants in eight centres: Bouaké, M'Bahiakro, Man, Gotongouiné, Guingreni, Korhogo, Daloa and Bondoukou. In addition, 10 other provisional centres for other types of training would be established.

Côte d'Ivoire is now irrevocably engaged in the electoral process, with nearly 6.5 million people registered in the country and abroad as of 30 June 2009, representing 75 per cent of the target population. The most recent electoral laws under consideration will be adopted shortly by the Government in order to accelerate the implementation of the electoral process so that the first round of elections can be held on 29 November. All the benchmarks and performance indicators for the major areas identified in the Ouagadougou Agreement and its supplementary agreements, and annexed to the report of the Secretary-General show steady progress in, if not the completion of, the main stages of the process for ending the crisis.

All the latest information available to my delegation points to the fact that presidential elections will be held on 29 November, based on the following timeline. Data processing for producing the voter registration list started two days ago on 21 July, and will end on 25 August. The provisional list will be issued in early September. Claims regarding the provisional list will be addressed throughout September. The final electoral list will be issued during the first week of October. Voter cards and national identity cards will be distributed in October and November. The electoral campaign will start on 15 November.

All these efforts by the Ivorian authorities should give rise to renewed optimism as to the effective holding of the first round of the presidential elections on 29 November. Unfortunately, it is during this stage, when the process is nearing completion, that there have been some attacks on the peace process and the institutions in Côte d'Ivoire. My delegation is referring to the recent statements by French personalities who made unfair and unjustified remarks against the Ivorian authorities and the ongoing process.

My delegation would not have dwelt on these remarks had it not been for the fact that they come from a Power which holds a special status in the settlement of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. No one can claim to be unaware that France has troops supporting United Nations peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire, that France is a permanent member of the Security Council, that France initiates draft resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire, and that France is therefore not just anybody in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. This heavy responsibility, as well as the influence and impact that French attitudes and comments can have in Côte d'Ivoire, should be reason for a greater sense of restraint and responsibility on France's part.

In any case, in conclusion, I wish to reassure the Council that the first round of presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire will definitely be held on 29 November. Everything is being done politically and logistically, and with the well-appreciated support of the United Nations, to honour that date.

The President: The representative of France has asked for the floor.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his comments.

I listened very closely to the comments of the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire. We did not intend to speak at this meeting, but the comments made by Mr. Djédjé, as Council members can well understand, came as some surprise to the French delegation.

France, like all other members of the Security Council, is fully committed to supporting Côte d'Ivoire so that all of end phases of the crisis can unfold in the best possible conditions, in particular the holding of elections within the established time frame. France is contributing on the ground as well, through military and financial contributions to the collective international action, and it is determined to continue to do so. The French authorities are committed to ensuring a successful end to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, which is, in point of fact, a country that is close to us and with which we have very close ties.

I do not understand what is behind the comments that have been made, but in any event, if they can be interpreted to mean that France is distancing itself from the objectives of the Security Council, I wish to state most emphatically that we do not agree with such an interpretation. France is resolved to pursue its activities, in the framework of the Security Council and on the basis of its resolutions, to assist Côte d'Ivoire to end the crisis and help it to meet its deadlines, in particular the electoral timetable. I solemnly reaffirm that commitment before the members of the Security Council.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.